



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ADVOCATES AND ALDERMEN,  
FURTHER STRENGTHENS PROTECTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE  
COMMUNITIES**

*Lightfoot administration removes all exceptions from the original Welcoming City Ordinance and strengthens existing Chicago Police Department procedures*

**CHICAGO** – Following the years-long effort of advocates and aldermen to amend to the Welcoming City Ordinance, the Chicago City Council today approved an ordinance to officially codify current Chicago Police Department (CPD) procedures where officers are prohibited from cooperating or sharing information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on civil immigration matters. This legislation reaffirms the commitments Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot has made throughout her tenure to protect Chicago's more than 500,000 immigrants against threats of raids and deportation from the federal government.

“Since my days on the campaign, I have been clear that for the City to live up to its values on protecting residents, and to make Chicago a truly welcoming city for immigrants and refugees that have always been our foundation, we have to not only strengthen our Welcoming City Ordinance but eliminate any 'carve-outs' that prevent the ordinance from fully ensuring public safety,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Over the past several months, the City along with Alderman Ramirez-Rosa, Alderman Rodriguez and immigration advocates, have been assessing the legal considerations of removing these 'carve-outs.' With these amendments, I look forward to further protecting the hundreds of thousands of immigrant and refugee families that make this city truly great.”

As previously drafted, the Welcoming City Ordinance excepts four classes of people from the prohibition on cooperating with ICE: individuals with an outstanding criminal warrant, individuals convicted of a felony, individuals presently serving as a defendant in a felony case, and individuals identified as a gang member. The legislation introduced today will remove the four classes of people that are currently exceptions from the prohibition on



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cooperation with ICE, end exceptions to the sharing of immigration information with ICE unless required by lawful order, prevent CPD from participating in civil immigration enforcement, and make technical changes needed to strengthen the ordinance.

The amendments were made possible thanks to the work of the Chicago Immigration Working Group, which includes the following advocacy organizations: Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago, Access Living, AFIRE Chicago, Arab American Action Network, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, HANA Center, Centro de Trabajadores Unidos, Enlace Chicago, Grassroots Collaborative, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Organized Communities Against Deportations, the National Immigrant Justice Center, Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America, Chicago Community and Workers' Rights, Chicago Jobs with Justice, the Latino Union of Chicago, the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, and Beyond Legal Aid.

“These amendments will allow me to feel safer to seek the supports and services I need as a person with a disability to live within my community, without the fear of being discriminated and criminalized because of my status and or background,” said Jose Garcia, undocumented and member of Cambiando Vidas at Access Living

After more than a year of work between immigration advocates, Alderman Ramirez-Rosa, Alderman Rodriguez, and Alderwoman Rodriguez Sanchez, the legislation will officially ensure all residents, citizens, and noncitizens alike, have the right to due process. By limiting the access ICE has to Chicago residents' information, the City is protecting them from potentially unlawful detainment. While undocumented immigrants are known to be targeted by the federal government, there are many immigrants with other status in Chicago (student visas, specialty workers, cultural exchange) who could also be targeted by the federal government. Beyond protecting due process, additional amendments close the loop in protecting survivors of crime by ensuring police will support them when they file a report and support survivors seeking immigration relief. Additionally, amendments create a more inclusive municipal code by eliminating the word “citizen” and replacing it with “public” or “resident.”

“The passage of these amendments represents years of organizing and advocacy by, and for, undocumented Chicagoans. No one should be afraid to call 911. By creating a clear line between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement we are strengthening immigrant protections and building a safer Chicago,” said Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, 35th Ward Alderman.



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Research shows that when jurisdictions limit cooperation with ICE and end civil immigration enforcement, communities are not only safer, but also thrive economically. For example, according to a report from the Center for American Progress, large central metro sanctuary counties have 65.4 fewer crimes per 10,000 people than their nonsanctuary counterparts. The same study concluded that other counties that participate in similar sanctuary initiatives experience lower poverty and unemployment rates, and higher household incomes.

“As someone who has worked on behalf of immigrants my entire career, I have never been prouder in our efforts to provide additional protections for our undocumented residents than I am today with the passage of this ordinance,” said Michael D. Rodriguez, 22nd Ward Alderman. “This country has been an oasis for immigrants and refugees looking for a better life, and I am proud to be a part of a city that continues to share those values.”

Research also shows that the removal of the ‘carve-outs’ can strengthen relations between immigrant communities and law enforcement by encouraging immigrants to assist local law enforcement in reporting and investigating crimes without fear for themselves or family members of being targeted for deportation. For example, according to a study led by the Center for Growth and Opportunity, when law enforcement agencies make it clear that they do not cooperate with immigration, the domestic homicide rate for Latina women lowers by an astonishing 62%.

"Immigrant rights organizers have been fighting for the elimination of the four exceptions for years, this is the result of organized communities throughout Chicago that are demanding the end of criminalization of immigrants. With the elimination of the exceptions, my community and I feel safer but we must continue to advocate to end ICE collaboration with law enforcement and abolish other policies that criminalize communities of color in Chicago," said Antonio Gutierrez, undocumented Chicago resident and Strategic Coordinator for Organized Communities Against Deportations.

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